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## Listener Supported, Direction for Radio

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LISTENER SUPPORTED,  
DIRECTION FOR RADIO

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DAYTON, Ohio, December 22, 1980 -- Radio in the United States is not dead, nor is it dying. With the growth of the cable and television industries, radio is also expanding its role for tomorrow's world. This according to Dr. Jack Rang, a University of Dayton communications professor and 40 year veteran of the medium.

Today, many Americans think about radio purely in terms of entertainment. In the October issue of Broadcasting magazine, the top 50 radio markets in the country listed "easy listening," also known as "beautiful music," as the most listened to format -- a music which Rang describes as having "nostalgic innocence" and being popular because it offers its audience an escape from worries about the economy and world affairs. Rang says that in two-thirds of the world where radio is government owned, the medium is used to educate essentially illiterate people. "When you see a barefooted individual walking down a mud-rutted road holding a transistor radio to his ear, he's not listening to Led Zeppelin. He's getting an education by radio, provided by his government."

But the direction of radio in this country is taking a turn. Rang believes tomorrow will bring to the American people the full development of radio as a tool for lifelong learning. In the past, he said, you had to fight in this country to get educational allocations for both radio and television stations. "The sad part is, we have never funded these (educational programs) sufficiently to make them interesting by comparison to commercial radio and TV." As for radio supplying the news, Rang claims

that function has largely been taken over by television. "Microelectronics is making television more portable, and television's portability will make it a real competitor for the drive time traditionally left to radio."

The future of radio, then, is in the small "mom and pop" type of station, supported by listeners above advertising dollars. Helping to make this a reality, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is planning to expand the AM dial to allow more allocations and hence, more small investor ownership. This move proposed by the FCC will put up to 101 new stations on the air. And that means more listener supported radio and more broadcasting time left for consumer affairs, community interest, and educational programming. With such a system operating primarily on listener funds, Rang explains that "you could do different programming because you wouldn't have to worry about commercial advertising dollars."

Rang points to 18-20 different formats for delivering radio that have recently been identified by broadcasting officials. And he ventures to say that "the probabilities are that within the next five to seven years, you'll have 200 formats in AM radio." More and more stations will identify a specific audience and program for them. And as the sophistication of our markets and the techniques to identify those markets heightens, there will be people out there who want to buy advertising time, says Rang. "And don't worry about people (the subscribers) paying for it. It would be worth it to them; for \$25 a year they could get their favorite weeknight program."

As the number and variety of media grow, so will grow the quality. "The average person in this country spends ten to eleven hours a day with media, between TV and radio. The more we get, the more discriminating our tastes will become."